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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Nothing takes the edge off more than some time off to relax. Yep, finally, I'm on vacation. It's been a long time coming - over six months since I've had any significant time off. I started it off with some golf. Not great golf, but certainly good enough to have a great time! Maybe I'll spend a day or two sitting out by the pool with a few cold drinks, just to get more in the mood. Then, maybe get some yard work done, and then some more relaxing. I could get used to this routine!

This is a long holiday weekend for us in the States. Please, celebrate responsibly!

Until next time...

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New Falcon Game: H2O

Finally a new Falcon game to enjoy, the super demo-crew EKO has released their long awaited H2O game. It's a bit similar to Lemmings in the way puzzles are solved.

http://eko.planet-d.net/

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. The Forth of July is coming up, and if

you’re living in the United States, you’ll see it everywhere you go. I’m going to mention this later on too, but I want to say right up front that you need to drive not only responsibly, but also defensively during the festivities. That includes dealing with the holiday fireworks that the kids’ Uncle Schmoe brings along to the cookout. A holiday is no fun if it includes a visit to the Emergency Room or worse.

The other thing I wanted to mention this week is a newspaper article I read this week about the return of McCarthyism. It was a particularly dark time in American politics, and if not for a few people who dared to buck the system-within-the-system, it might have gone a lot farther.

Today, I’m afraid that the system-within-the-system and those who manipulate it have gotten not only more sophisticated but also more cut-throat. The Cult of the Ends Justify the Means is alive and well and living in the beltway right now, and it reminds me more and more of an episode of The X-Files run amok. The arts of bait-and-switch and disinformation have taken the place of statesmanship.

I know that there are plenty of people out there who will strongly disagree with me on almost every point, and that’s fine with me. There’s nothing wrong with a spirited discussion or even a downright knock-down drag-out argument. There IS something wrong, however, with telling people that speaking their minds is, in and of itself, detrimental.

So on The Forth, do something patriotic... Speak your mind!

Okay, let’s get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

While it’s not strictly Atari-related, Ronald Hall picks up on a comment that Dave Wade made about routers and firewalls:

"...Why don’t you think any of the cable routers firewalls are "decent"? (accepting as a given that there is no such thing as being totally secure)."

Dave tells Ronald:

"I guess it depends what you are after. They don’t seem to add much over and above the security you get from NAT. If you are talking Windows boxes and catching out-bound traffic from a PC then they don’t know which app has made the connection. What is trying to connect to port 25. Is it Outlook Express/Eudora/Firebird which is probably OK, or some Trojan, in which case its probably not OK.

In order to figure this out you need to run the firewall on the end device. However even if you run a fire wall on your PC things don’t get much better because many of the firewalls prompt when they are not sure. I estimate that >99% of PC users don’t know which applications should connect on which port...

I also think that protective apps such as firewalls, anti-virus, and spy

guards is that the induce a false sense of security. Users click without thinking what they are doing, because they expect to be safe, rather than thinking "is this something I should be doing". Safe Computing is a combination of applications + culture. Most folks don't think..."

Coda jumps in and adds:

"Yeah I agree with the PC that if you have serious security issues then you need to spend a LOT of dough on something like a separate box running Checkpoint, or you could do what I did and have a separate linux box running IPChains or maybe that freeware firewall, I forget the name now. For most of us, a cheap generic router running the (and not brilliant either) connexant firmware will do an adequate job.

In this case the user here in question wants to connect their TT/Falcon (whoever heard of spyware or virii that make outbound network connections?) - so then in this case the firewall is superfluous."

Ronald tells Coda and Dave:

"Hmm, have to agree with most of what you say - considering you're talking about Windoze machines.

I use a Dlink hardware router here, firmware updated, with a Mandriva Linux setup. I run Shorewall as the firewall as well. Again, given that nothing is totally secure, still...I feel *fairly* secure with this setup."

Dan Iacovelli posts this about the upcoming Atari Flashback 2.0:

"If anybody here is near Chicago on July 16th, you can test the retail version of the Atari Flashback 2.0 (first time anywhere) at the 8-Bit Classics booth at VGS. Here is the press release:

Atari Video Club/Jaguar Community United is proud to announce that with help from Corey Koltz of 8-bit Classics (http://www.8bitclassics.com) and Curt Vendel of the Atari Museum http://www.atarimuseum.com/) that The Atari Flashback 2.0 game console will take it's first midwestern appearance at The 2005 Video Game Summit in July before it's initial release in August. This will be it's first public showing in full retail form. The Atari Flashback 2.0 made it's first southwestern appearance at the Oklahoma Video Game Expo on June 18t(before that it was shown at the Electronic Entertainment Expo back in May). The Atari Flashback 2.0 features 40 built in 2600 games all using actual 2600 technology (some games are classics but there are a few new homebrew games included). Plus the controllers are interchangeable with classic Atari controllers. Stop by the 8-bit classics table at VGS'05 to check out The Atari Flashback 2.0 and flashback to the 70's when you got your first 2600.

The 2005 Video Game Summit will be on July 16th,2005 from 9am to 6pm Fairfield inn and Suites (Heron point building), 645 West North Ave, Lombard, IL 60148.

Join the Video Game Summit mailing list for updates on the event (VideoGameSummit-Subscribe@yahoogroups.com) Visit the VGS website:

http://avc.atari-users.net/Events/FestVGS.html

For more information about Video Game Summit contact Daniel Iacovelli at AtariVideoClub@yahoo.com."

GO GET 'EM, DAN!
Coda asks:

"Where can I get me one of those in the UK?"

Derryck Croker tells Coda:

"This was on demo at the Cheshunt Computer Club meeting last week!"

Stephen Moss adds:

"Amazon are selling them IIRC ´£30 ($50.00 - $55.00 USD) a pop."

Bill Glaholt posts this about a new Citadel-type BBS:

"Greetings, everyone!

I am very pleased to announce that STinGadel, the Atari ST multi-user Citadel-type bbs program, is now in 'Beta' mode. I've put up my bbs, Cold Winter Knights, using the software as the official beta site.

I would like to welcome anyone and everyone to log in and give it a test run. Please remember that it *is* on an Atari 1040STe, and as such, it may be a bit slow, relative to today's supra-high-speed machines.

STinGadel's features:
"Room"-based citadel-type bbs system: Each room is a message topic. One can 'goto' each room with new messages, or just 'jump' to a specific room. One can read messages with "F" (read all forward), "R" (Read all reverse), "L" (Latest # of messages), and "N" (New since you last read the room).
* Up to 24 simultaneous connections allowed; each connection is continuously 'polled'.
* VT100-enabled "IRC"-like chat mode.
* Up to 128 rooms
* Sysop-configurable: message memory cache (for speedy message reading/access), message base size, userbase size, menus.
* Note: There is *no* console mode. All connections *must* be from and through STinG for the moment. I *may* add a console mode, but the stock ST's screen drawing subsystem is *SO* slow, and thus everyone else would slow down.

Requirements:
* Atari ST machine (only originals have been tested; I would like TT or Falcon testers, if anyone is even remotely interested)
* 4 MB memory. (for speed purposes, almost everything is contained in memory, requiring a great deal of free space)
* 10 MB hard drive space -- probably not a problem
* STinG connection. Theoretically, a continuous modem connection *would* work, but who would want that, really -- I'd *HIGHLY*

recommend an ethernet (I use EtherNEC personally) connection.
* A static IP, if you want people to be able to log in. :)

Log into Cold Winter Knights BBS with a VT100/ANSI/XTERM connection by telnetting to bbs.coldwinterknights.net

Also, I'm going to continuously update the web site (http://www.coldwinterknights.net) with big sightings, fix-lists, etc, suggestions to be implemented, etc.

One final note, if I may: Remember that it *is* in Beta. I fully expect it to crash during the beta testing period. If you attempt to telnet in and find it hanging, or cannot connect, and so on, that means it's down until I can figure out what went wrong. Thanks for reading, and happy Atari-ing!!"

Coda asks Bill:

"Can you change the port that it listens on?"

Bill replies:

"Not yet, but that's a great idea - and pretty easy addition. I will get to it as soon as possible!

For the record, the Beta board is down at the moment; someone connected via a terminal that asked for some strange telnet information that I need to deal with. I'll be working on it when i get home from work and get it back to going again."

Coda replies:

"The reason why I would need it to listen on a different port is that I already run telnet on port 23, but actually I cant think of a reason why I cant move the telnet service instead."

Bill tells Coda:

"I know it wasn't you -- it actually was someone on a MOO that I talk to all the time. Fortunately, he was able to tell me just what he did..

And, through the research of that, I completely revamped the telnet preprocessing negotiation/handshake routine. It is now far *FAR* more durable and bullet-evasive than before. (it's in beta, after all, so I can't say 'bullet-proof' *JUST* yet.. heh)

Anyway, it's back up now.

Again, thanks for the suggestion, Coda - it's on my short (but ever growing) list of additional features."

Dennis Bishop asks about repairing an ICD host adaptor:

"I have a ICD host card that worked up until the major roof leaking and flooding my machines. I was using it on my TT, which itself is ok, but the card died. Does anyone know if anyplace can repair the card? I tried ICD and got no answer back from them at all."

Uwe Seimet asks Dennis:

"There is no way to use the TT's SCSI port instead? This is faster and more powerful than ACSI with the ICD adapter anyway."

Dennis replies:

"I've used both ports, the host card had an old BIG (size not storage) ibm drive on it and it worked fine with the host. Plus as my bootup was set up with ICH ult's I don't have the catching now nor the extra folders beyond the 64 limit without the host. I wanted to fire up that drive and see if I could recover the files I put on it and transfer them to the 2ga one inside the machine."

'Phantom' tells Dennis:

"I have a suggestion:

If you can find someone near to you that has a similar card, Maybe they would let you borrow it long enough to transfer your files over.

As far as fixing the board, Just about anything can be fixed but it depends on the amount of damage. ICs for these boards can be hard to find if ICD made there own special versions.

A ICD (THE LINK) or (THE LINK II) would be good replacements.
If you can find them. I use a LINK II with my 1040STE and have never had a problem with any SCSI hard drive that I've used with it.
Those Links are in good small plastic cases.
Originally they came with ICD's hard drive utilities. And its not bad software to use on 1040STe/MegaSTe/etc. Not knocking HD Driver,
Its good also. Use it on one of my Falcons.

BTW, if you decide not to keep that damaged board. In stead of throwing it out. Give/sell or trade it to me. I tinker on all kinds of Atari hardware when I have the time. Don't know if I could fix it without looking at it. But might could use a chip or something off of it, if they are not all fried."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Please, please, please be careful both on the road and in the back yard during the holiday. Use your head and don't drink and drive. Remember: The life you save may be MINE! <grin>

'Till next week, keep your nose to the grindstone, your back to the wheel, and your ear to the ground. And don't forget to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - The Fantastic 4 Ships!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Evil Dead Regeneration!
2005 Video Games Summit!
And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Fantastic 4 Ships

Marvel's first family of Super Heroes is taking the video game world by storm with the release of Activision, Inc.'s Fantastic 4, which is currently available in retail stores nationwide. Based on Twentieth Century Fox's highly anticipated "Fantastic 4" feature film, the team-based action adventure game lets players take on the role of Marvel Super Heroes, Reed Richards/Mr. Fantastic, Sue Storm/The Invisible Woman, Johnny Storm/The Human Torch and Ben Grimm/The Thing and master each character's powers - stretching, invisibility, shooting fire and leveling superhuman attacks - to overcome the evil Doctor Doom.

"Fantastic 4 lets gamers relive the action and excitement of one of the summer's most anticipated films, from the plot to the locations to the actors," said Kathy Vrabeck, president, Activision Publishing. "Players also experience more than the film in a completely original storyline that expands the Super Heroes' universe through exclusive game missions and environments."

Co-written by Zak Penn, who co-wrote the story for "X2" and is co-writing the screenplay for the upcoming "X3," Fantastic 4 lets players defeat enemies and overcome obstacles in team-based combat and two-player co-op mode. Gamers control all four team members and can dynamically switch between characters to wreak havoc in a variety of destructible environments inspired by popular comic book locales. Players take on the following roles:

* Mr. Fantastic -- Fans use brainpower to hack computers, override security systems and outsmart their enemies as they deliver stretch attacks from a distance, squeeze into tight spaces and go where no one else can.
* The Invisible Woman -- Players become invisible and perform stealth moves with ninja like speed or immobilize enemies using force fields created through telekinetic powers.
* The Human Torch -- Gamers create walls of fire, level super nova fireballs or shoot flames from their fingertips to ward off enemies.
* The Thing -- Fans use brute force to pick up heavy objects, tear them

apart and savagely obliterate foes.

The movie’s five leading actors reprise their roles for the game. Jessica Alba ("Dark Angel," "Sin City") portrays Sue Storm; Emmy award winner Michael Chiklis ("The Shield") is The Thing; Chris Evans ("The Perfect Score," "Cellular") plays Johnny Storm; Ioan Gruffudd ("King Arthur") is Reed Richards; and Julian McMahon ("Charmed," "Nip/Tuck") is Victor Von Doom/Dr. Doom.

Fantastic 4 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system, Xbox video game system from Microsoft, and the Nintendo GameCube was developed by Seven Studios, the PC version was developed by Beenox and Fantastic 4 for the Game Boy Advance was developed by Torus Games. The console SKUs and PC game have been rated "T" (Teen - with mild language and violence) by the ESRB, and the Game Boy Advance version has been rated "E-10+" (Everyone 10 and older - with animated violence).

New Playstation 2: Evil Dead Regeneration

The game explores a "what if..." continuation from Evil Dead 2, one of the most unhinged films from famed director Sam Raimi. Voiced by Bruce Campbell, players will control Ash, the reluctant hero of the series, as they’re thrown into a masquerade of evil events, equipped with the latest in prosthetic fashion. Developed by THQ studio Cranky Pants Games, Evil Dead Regeneration is scheduled to release this summer.

Evil Dead Regeneration follows Ash, the lone survivor of a camp discovering the Necronomicon - the wholly evil book of the dead. Thought to have murdered his companions, Ash is arrested, convicted of the crime, and sentenced to Sunny Meadows, an institute for the criminally insane, but not for long. Ash’s peaceful stay is about to end - thanks to the perverted experiments of his very own psychiatrist, Dr. Reinhard. Hell-bent on using science to harness the Necronomicon’s powers, the mad doctor unleashes the book’s all-powerful Evil on the world - releasing a new slew of Deadites, monsters and spirits, twisting reality into a hellish strudel and leaving mankind with that not-so-fresh apocalyptic feeling.

MTV and Midway Games to Launch 3 New Video Games

MTV Networks said on Monday it struck a marketing deal with Midway Games Inc. to jointly launch three video games and sell in-game advertising for those titles.

The music television cable network and Midway will also collaborate on soundtrack development for the three games.

Under the deal, Viacom Inc.’s MTV will participate in a royalty-sharing structure.

The first title to be released under the new marketing deal, "L.A. Rush," debuts in October. Other games will be released in 2006 and 2007, a Midway spokesman said.

Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone owns a majority of voting shares in both MTV and Chicago-based Midway.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!

The 2005 Video Game Summit

Contact: Dan Iacovelli
E-mail: AtariVideoClub@yahoo.com

For Immediate Release:
6/26/2005

The Atari Video Club/Jaguar Community United announced their plans for their next Video game and Computer trade show in 2005 entitled the 2005 Video Game Summit.

The date of the show will be July 16th, 2005 from 9am to 6pm at the same location we had the last two shows Fairfield inn and Suites (Heron point building), 645 West North Ave, Lombard, IL 60148.

Based on the number of tables sold from the first two shows It was decided to only use one big room and the hallway for this years show. But don't let that discourage you because this years show will have something the last two shows didn't; Free Internet access and we are pleased to have Pizza and pop served at this year's show. Pizza's are 16" and serve four people and they are $8.50 per person Pop is being served by consumption at $1.50.

Besides that we plan to have many tournaments as well as raffles at the show. Admission is Free to the public and tables are $15.00 each. Mail and Online payments are are no longer being accepted but you can still pay for tables (limited # of tables are available (first come first serve)) and pizza reservations at the show.

The Video game summit is proud to have the first public showing in the midwest of the Atari Flashback 2.0 Game console in it's retail form at the show. (The Atari Flashback 2.0 features 40 built in 2600 games all using actual 2600 technology(some games are classics but there are a few new homebrew games included). Plus the controllers are interchangeable with classic Atari controllers. Stop by the 8-bit classics table at the show to check out The Atari Flashback 2.0. Thanks to Corey Koltz of 8-bit classics (http://www.8bitclassics.com) and Curt Vendel of the Atari Museum (http://www.atarimuseum.com/) for setting this up for the show. Be sure to visit The Video Game Summit shop for all show related items at http://www.cafepress.com/vgs.

The 2005 Video Game Summit is sponsored by the following: 8bitclassic.com, AtariAge.com,Digital Press, EBgames.com (Broadview,IL), Goatstore.com, Good Deal Games, Mobygames.com, TomMage.com, Video Game Collector magazine,

Video Game Connection and Ye olde' Infomcomme shoppe.

Join the Video Game Summit mailing list for updates on the event (VideoGameSummit-Subscribe@yahoogroups.com) Visit the VGS website: http://avc.atari-users.net/Events/FestVGS.html For more information about Video Game Summit contact Daniel Iacovelli at AtariVideoClub@yahoo.com

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Little Agreement on Spyware Guidelines

Many anti-spyware programs scour computer hard drives for those data-tracking files called cookies that we often get from Web visits. Microsoft Corp.'s tool does not. And there are disputes aplenty about whether certain widely used advertising programs circulating on the Internet are clean of spyware.

No surprise, then, that there's little agreement on what should be considered spyware, and what adware is exactly. Or on whether adware, which delivers ads, is a form of spyware or a breed apart.

Consumers are confounded. Is their computer-cleaning overzealous or not thorough enough? Are they removing useful programs with the dreck?

No less vexed are makers of anti-spyware software. They're beset by legal headaches, constantly challenged for what their products define and target as malware.

"It certainly distracts us from the job at hand," said David Moll, chief executive of Webroot Software Inc.

Help may be on the way. Led by the tech-advocacy group Center for Democracy and Technology, the anti-spyware industry is crafting definitions and plans to eventually set up dispute-resolution procedures. A draft is expected by late summer.

"A definition is the foundation," said Ari Schwartz, the center's associate director. "If a consumer's going to make a decision in the marketplace about what they have and what software they are going to use, it's helpful to have a basis to do that on."

Similar efforts, however, have failed before.

Part of the challenge stems from how the term "spyware" evolved.

"It started out as being called spyware because a lot of it was spying on people and sending personal information," said Dave Methvin, chief technology officer with tech diagnostic site PC Pitstop. "It's a catchy, quick word that is always easy for people to understand and say."

But the term stuck even as some of these programs, in response to consumer complaints, began sending back less data and became less sneaky.

In some people’s minds, spyware came to include programs that change Web browser settings without asking or trick users into racking up huge phone bills by making the equivalent of "900" calls to foreign porn sites.

"’Spyware’ has sort of become the euphemism for any software I don’t want," said Wayne Porter, co-founder of SpywareGuide.com.

The result is chaos.

Microsoft, for instance, chose not to scan cookies because many sites need them to remember passwords and otherwise customize a surfer’s experience. Cory Treffiletti of the online ad agency Carat Interactive says cookies help sites identify repeat visitors so the same ads aren’t shown over and over.

But other spyware hunters flag cookies on the grounds that they help advertisers track behavior. EarthLink Inc.’s Scott Mecredy says anti-spyware programs have gotten sophisticated enough to distinguish good cookies from bad.

Then there’s the question of whether "spyware" includes adware.

Claria Corp., formerly known as Gator Corp., has sued several anti-spyware companies and Web sites for calling its advertising software "spyware." PC Pitstop rewrote some of its materials as part of a settlement.

Even "adware" isn’t good enough for some.

Joseph Telafici, director of operations for McAfee Inc.’s security research unit, says the company now gets one or two complaints a week, compared with two or three per quarter last year from companies whose programs it has dubbed spyware or adware.

McAfee is in the process of assigning a full-time lawyer.

Symantec Corp. sought to preempt a lawsuit by filing one itself, asking a federal court to declare that it had the right to call Hotbot.com Inc.’s toolbar adware. Hotbot did not respond to requests for comment.

Symantec still faces a lawsuit by Trekeight LLC, whose product Symantec brands adware.

Though it has yet to sue, 180solutions Inc. takes issue with "adware," preferring "searchware" or "sponsorware." "Adware" has become too linked with bad actors, and the industry needs more differentiation, said its chief executive, Keith Smith. Most anti-spyware vendors, however, still put 180solutions in that category.

Aluria Software LLC says one company, WhenU.com Inc., has changed its practices enough that it is now spyware- and adware-safe.

But America Online Inc., though it uses Aluria’s technology, prefers a different test: What its users think.

AOL found that users overwhelmingly choose to rid their computers of WhenU’s SaveNow application when anti-spyware scans uncover it, so AOL

continues to list as adware.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that many legitimate programs - including Microsoft Corp.’s Windows operating system and Web browser - send out data without making the user fully aware, one of the common attributes of spyware.

And many programs that spy do have legitimate functions - people may run a keystroke recorder to monitor spouses whom they suspect of cheating. Or they may willingly accept adware in exchange for a free game or screensaver.

Anti-spyware software companies say they leave removal decisions to customers, though many users simply follow their recommendations, failing to distinguish the mild from the malicious.

"If an anti-spyware company recommends that the software (gets) blocked, consumers will typically block it," said Keith Smith, chief executive of 180solutions. "It doesn’t matter how good an experience they have with it."

Alex St. John, chief executive of WildTangent Inc., says anti-spyware companies have an incentive to overlist programs: It makes their products appear effective. Better definitions, he said, would help clear his company’s game-delivery product.

"We want to do anything under our power to be clearly defined as a legitimate, upright consumer company," he said. "We would love to have something to adhere to."

Guidelines could give anti-spyware vendors a better defense.

For consumers, said Tori Case of Computer Associates International Inc., "if we start using the correct terminology, we can demystify it a bit and help people understand what the real risks are."

New Worm Kedebe-F Circulates with Conspiracy Theories

Worm-laden e-mails are proliferating, enticing users to download malicious programs by promising links to news about Michael Jackson’s demise or conspiracies about Pope John Paul II’s death.

Antivirus software firm Sophos issued a warning about Kedebe-F, a new worm that spreads using several different subject lines and messages, many related to current news topics.

If a user clicks on the link and downloads the attached file, the worm might even disable security software before sending itself to e-mail addresses found on the infected computer. The worm also can delete files from the computer and install itself in the Windows registry.

In messages containing supposed news items, the links promise exclusive material not covered in the mainstream press. One message about the recent death of Pope John Paul II purports to contain a document stolen from a secret government body and describes how the Pope actually was killed as part of a larger plot.

Another message, ironically, announces the capture of the MyDoom worm author, and claims that he was arrested by Microsoft.

Most worm writers at this point are depending on what have become classic lures, such as promises of adult-themed material or requests for security updates that allegedly come from a user's financial institution.

The sender of Kedebe-F seems to be somewhat unique, though, by trying to include as many of these enticements as possible. Instead of drawing on one or two tactics, the messages with the worm attached use news pegs, adult material and user-centered information like warnings about Internet accounts.

This type of scattershot approach might become more common if the tactic is successful for worm and virus senders. "If a strategy works, it will be repeated until it doesn't work anymore," said Graham Cluley, Sophos senior technology consultant.

As with other types of worms, users are cautioned to be suspicious of e-mail messages promising exclusive news or network messages supposedly from an Internet service provider.

"People should know by now not to open these things, but sometimes it's difficult for them because the messages come from an account that looks legitimate," said Cluley.

Another challenge is that many users swap interesting news tidbits through e-mail, Cluley added, which increases the likelihood that they will open the infected messages.

Grokster Decision Worries Tech Industry

The technology world - from multibillion-dollar computer companies to garage tinkerers - faces new and potentially costly uncertainties with the Supreme Court's ruling that inventors can be held liable if third parties use their products to infringe on copyrights.

Though Monday's ruling specifically addressed the activities of file-sharing companies Grokster Ltd. and StreamCast Networks Inc., it could invite lawsuits against others whose products or services are deemed as encouraging infringement. That leaves a broad gray area yet to be defined, critics said.

"It's fair to say that with the decision the legal clarity has decreased and the risk of litigation has increased," said Michael Petricone, technology policy vice president at the Consumer Electronics Association trade group. "From a competitive standpoint, that is just not a good thing."

Examples of technology that can be used to swap songs and movies are everywhere, though it's not clear how many of those companies can be said to have "induced" piracy to the extent of Grokster and StreamCast.

Apple Computer Inc. once advertised the joys of ripping, burning and mixing CDs on a Macintosh computer. In the PC world, Intel Corp. microprocessors, Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system and countless other inventions - such as the DVD burner - all make copyright infringement easy.

Might a broadband provider’s claim of "faster downloads" be perceived as an inducement to steal copyrighted material? Will innovative startups have to hire legal teams to review every aspect of a business before it even incorporates?

Still, the decision could have been far worse from the innovator’s perspective.

The court did not alter its landmark 1984 ruling that protected Sony Corp. from liability even though some of its VCRs were used to infringe on copyrights. That "safe harbor" continues to protect innovators whose products have non-infringing purposes, though Monday’s decision added a new test: the developer’s intent.

The Supreme Court’s written opinion went to lengths to outline actions Grokster and StreamCast took to build their businesses by offering copyright materials rather than public domain materials. Both gave away their software in an effort to boost advertising revenues.

"Users seeking Top 40 songs ... are certain to be far more numerous than those seeking a free Decameron, and Grokster and StreamCast translated that demand into dollars," the court’s opinion reads.

The decision seems to maintain the balance between innovation and copyright protection, said Pamela Samuelson, a law professor at the University of California. "By preserving a safe harbor for technologies with substantial lawful uses, it adopted a far more moderate rule than (copyright holders) had recommended," she said. "An order for further proceedings on theory that Grokster actively induced copyright infringement did not come as a big surprise."

In fact, most major technology companies declined comment, either saying they were studying the decision or did not see how it applied to their businesses.

Jennifer Greeson, an Intel spokeswoman, said the world’s largest chip maker was pleased that the court did not alter the Sony ruling. She declined to discuss the case further as the company was still reviewing the decision.

Among tech companies that welcomed the ruling were those that rely on the so-called peer-to-peer (P2P) networking technology that underlies StreamCast and Grokster’s products but have sought to work with the recording industry.

"It’s a fantastic boost for us," said Wayne Rosso, chief executive for the Virginia Beach, Va.-based Mashboxx, which is among a new crop of P2P-based services slated to launch this year to offer music download sales and, in some cases, swapping of tracks that are not under copyright restrictions.

"I think you’ll see the investment community suddenly rush in to support the licensed P2P model," suggested Rosso, who once headed the company behind the Grokster file-swapping software.

Gregory Kerber, chairman and chief executive of Saratoga Springs, N.Y.-based Wurld Media, was also optimistic about the impact the file-sharing decision will have for its P2P-based music service, Peer Impact.

"The ruling removes a roadblock that has hampered the widespread development of legitimate online music models," said Kerber.

But Cindy Cohn, legal director at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which represented StreamCast, said the ruling will do more to hamper innovation given the uncertainty it has created.

"We went to the Supreme Court hoping to get a clarity about a bright line rule that innovators can live with and copyright infringers could live with," she said. "And instead we got sent back a murky, multifactored test that’s going to result in more litigation for years to come."

IBM Wins $850M Settlement From Microsoft

IBM Corp. will get $775 million in cash and $75 million worth of software from Microsoft Corp. to settle claims still lingering from the federal government’s antitrust case against Microsoft in the 1990s, the companies announced Friday.

The payout is one of the largest that Microsoft has made to settle an antitrust-related case. And it brings the software giant closer to putting behind it claims involving technologies long since eclipsed.

IBM was pressing for restitution for the "discriminatory treatment" that U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson cited when he ruled in 2000 that Microsoft had broken antitrust law.

In the 1990s, IBM irked Microsoft by selling PCs loaded with its own operating system, OS/2, as an alternative to Windows, and with its SmartSuite productivity software, cutting into the market for Microsoft Office programs. IBM also backed Java, a programming language that doesn’t need Windows to run.

Jackson noted that Microsoft retaliated by charging IBM more than other PC makers for copies of Windows.

There were other tactics, too. Months before Windows 95 came out, Microsoft let other PC companies pre-install the operating system on new computers that could go on sale right after the launch. But IBM got its license only 15 minutes before the event.

As a result, many customers eager to use the latest software opted for machines made by IBM’s rivals. Since Windows 95 arrived in August, IBM missed out on back-to-school sales and lost "substantial revenue," Jackson wrote.

IBM didn’t sue Microsoft over the findings, but kept the right to do so under a 2003 agreement between the companies. Similar talks led to a $150 million settlement with Gateway Inc. in April.

Separately, Microsoft has spent more than $3 billion in recent years settling lawsuits by rivals, including a $1.6 billion deal with Sun Microsystems Inc. in 2004 and a $750 million truce with America Online, part of Time Warner Inc., in 2003.

Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft still faces other legal challenges, including a lawsuit by RealNetworks Inc. and an appeal of a $600 million antitrust ruling against it by European regulators. Though software maker Novell Inc. reached a $536 million settlement with Microsoft in November,

Novell got a judge’s approval last month to proceed with a separate antitrust suit over the WordPerfect word-processing program.

Even so, Microsoft’s general counsel, Brad Smith, said he believes antitrust issues are close to being resolved. IBM had been the biggest rival with a pending claim.

"This takes us another very significant step forward," he said. "We’re entering what I think is the final stage of this process."

The $775 million payment will pad IBM’s second-quarter earnings, which are due to be released in two weeks. The Armonk, N.Y.-based company is coming off a first-quarter report that included a $1.4 billion profit but fell short of Wall Street’s expectations.

Microsoft set aside $550 million for antitrust claims in April, during the company’s fiscal third quarter. At least part of the IBM payment could result in a charge in the company’s fourth quarter; results are due to be released July 21.

IBM shares rose 35 cents to $74.55 in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange. Microsoft shares fell 9 cents to $24.75 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

When Jackson ruled against Microsoft in 2000, he ordered the company broken into two as punishment. But a year later, the Clinton-era Justice Department having given way to the Bush administration, the government decided not to seek the breakup. The case was settled in 2002.

Even with Friday’s deal, IBM reserved the right to press claims that its server business was harmed by Microsoft’s behavior. But such claims appear unlikely to surface soon, because IBM agreed not to seek damages for actions that occurred before mid-2002. That means the findings in Jackson’s ruling would no longer apply.

But while much of that case is anachronistic now - OS/2 faded by the late 1990s, and IBM doesn’t even make PCs anymore, having sold the business to China’s Lenovo Group Ltd. - there’s still conflict between Microsoft and IBM.

Perhaps Microsoft’s toughest competitive challenge today comes from the open-source Linux operating system, which has made steady gains especially in overseas markets. Some of Linux’s biggest backing has come from IBM.

Yahoo Updates E-mail Service

Yahoo is preparing to unveil the next generation of its free Web e-mail service with a radically new look and feel that mimics that of desktop e-mail programs such as Microsoft’s Outlook.

The new Yahoo Mail service loads messages and executes commands far more quickly and elegantly than most Web-based e-mail services, including Microsoft’s popular Hotmail service.

The Sunnyvale Internet company will make the new service available to select users in the coming weeks, but it would not say when it might be available to all users.

The new version is the first significant product to come out of Yahoo’s acquisition last summer of Oddpost, a small San Francisco company that offered Web-based e-mail.

The Oddpost team relocated to Yahoo’s main campus and has been building the new version of Yahoo Mail ever since.

The revamped e-mail - Yahoo calls it the "most significant overhaul" ever of Yahoo Mail - is a stark departure from traditional Web-based e-mail services. Users can easily scroll through all the messages in their inboxes, drag and drop messages to folders, delete messages with a single keystroke and use many of the standard keyboard shortcuts common to desktop e-mail programs.

The underpinning of the new e-mail interface is a technology known as Dynamic HTML, which quickly refreshes a user’s browser window even before the browser is done communicating with Yahoo’s servers. The technology eliminates the delays that come from waiting for Web pages to reload.

Unlike Oddpost, which was available only to users of the Internet Explorer browser on Windows machines, the new Yahoo Mail will also be accessible to Firefox browser users on both the Apple Macintosh and Windows platforms.

While lauded by users and product reviewers, Oddpost struggled with numerous problems, including sluggishness.

Ethan Diamond, one of the founders of Oddpost who is now at Yahoo, said those problems were fixed with the move to Yahoo.

"That was part of the sweet thing about coming here to Yahoo," Diamond said. "There’s a huge team of people here making sure that this can scale."

Because the new Yahoo Mail is so different from what people are accustomed to, the company will move people to the new version gradually. Beta-testers will be able to toggle between the two versions.

"We don’t want to interrupt the experience or change it for people who don’t want to change," said Yahoo spokeswoman Karen Mahon.

The company will also need to maintain a traditional version of Yahoo Mail for Web browsers or other devices that do not work with the new version.

Oddpost account-holders and heavy Yahoo Mail users will be among the first to try the new technology.

The revamped Yahoo Mail will draw comparisons to Google’s Gmail, a free Web-based e-mail service that the Mountain View company launched last year. Still in beta-test mode, Gmail won plaudits for its user interface, which responds quickly to user commands.

Parents Can Sign Up Kids to Not Get E-Mail

Starting Friday, parents can sign up for what Michigan officials say is the nation’s first registry aimed at keeping spammers from sending children inappropriate e-mail. The new law bans sending messages to children related to such things as pornography, illegal or prescription drugs, alcohol,

tobacco, gambling, firearms or fireworks. Parents and schools will be able to register children's e-mail addresses.

"From my perspective as a parent, I'm horrified by what comes in" to her three children's e-mail accounts, Gov. Jennifer Granholm said during a news conference Thursday. "This will put an end, we hope, to inappropriate e-mail getting to our children."

Signing up for the registry is free, and parents soon will be able to add their children's instant message IDs, mobile phone numbers, fax numbers and pager numbers.

E-mail senders must comply with the new law by Aug. 1. Violators face up to three years in jail or fines up to $30,000 if convicted of breaking the law, and could face civil penalties of up to $5,000 per message sent.

Some Internet safety experts have said anti-spam laws have been difficult to enforce and others worry the lists will give hackers a way to get access to a large database of children.

Public Service Commission Chairman Peter Lark said safeguards, including encryption of e-mail addresses and other information, will keep the Michigan registry secure.

Utah is getting ready to set up a similar registry for children there.

On the Net: http://www.michigan.gov/protectmichild

Hacker Posts Crack for Google Software

The Norwegian who became a hacker hero for developing software to unlock copy-protection codes on DVD movies said he needed only one day to crack Google Inc.'s new video viewer.

Jon Lech Johansen, also known as DVD Jon, posted software on his "So Sue Me" Web site that he says modifies the viewer so that it plays videos hosted on any server. The company's Google Video Viewer, in turn, was modified from the free VLC media player to restrict it to playing video hosted on Google's own servers.

Johansen's modification wasn't difficult as Google already had posted its code on its Web site. And the change won't let users break any video encryption; it only lets them view non-Google content.

"This modification of Google's open source video viewer does not compromise the integrity and security of content available from Google Video in any way," Google spokesman Nate Tyler said in a statement.

Nonetheless, he advised users against installing the change, saying "it could result in security vulnerabilities on their computer and may disrupt their computer's ability to access Google Video."

Johansen, 21, became a hero to hackers at age 15, when he posted software called DeCSS to unlock the Content Scrambling System, or CSS, the film industry used on DVD movies to prevent illegal copying. The act made Johansen a folk hero among hackers.

After the film industry complained, Norwegian authorities charged him with data break-in, but Johansen was acquitted at trial and on appeal.

Johansen, an advocate of the open-source philosophy of making software code freely available for inspection and sharing, has also repeatedly posted programs that circumvent the copy-protection technologies on Apple Computer Inc.’s iTunes software.

Google’s shares have more than tripled to more than $300 in the 10 months since their debut. Most of the company’s income is from online advertising, although it could boost revenues by charging for some videos in the future.

The company has been stockpiling amateur and professional videos since April, when it asked users to submit their images, and the new viewer allows them to sample the collection for free.

The Google Video Viewer, consisting of about 1 megabyte and still officially in a "beta" test phase, was designed to do nothing but stream Google’s videos through the Internet Explorer or Firefox Web browsers. Its limited scope meant it wouldn’t be competing with the popular multimedia players made by Microsoft Corp. and RealNetworks Inc.

’Timeshare Spammer’ Set to Plead Guilty

A man known as "The Timeshare Spammer" said Thursday he will plead guilty to one count of violating anti-spam laws, marking one of the first prosecutions using the federal statute.

Peter Moshou, 37, of Auburndale, Fla., could face up to three years in prison for violating a federal anti-spam law. Prosecutors say Moshou sent millions of unsolicited commercial e-mails using Atlanta-based EarthLink’s network.

The messages, sent throughout 2004 and 2005, were about brokerage services for people interested in selling their timeshares.

EarthLink filed a civil lawsuit against Moshou in January after the company detected a massive influx of spam in its system and later handed its investigation over to federal prosecutors.

On Thursday, as Moshou awaited a first hearing with U.S. Magistrate Gerrilyn Brill, he did not seem like a man who could face prison time and a fine of up to $350,000 for sending the spam e-mails. Wearing a striped shirt and tennis shoes, Moshou idly chatted with prosecutors about spam attempts, laughing as one joked about spamming ploys.

But when the court hearing began, no one on either side of the counsel table was laughing.

"Internet spam is more than just an annoyance," said U.S. Attorney David Nahmias. "It is criminal."

EarthLink says the e-mails falsify "from" addresses, use deceptive subject lines, fail to identify the sender and fail to provide an electronic unsubscribe option, among other violations.

Those requirements are part of the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited

Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003. Spammers who violate the rules face possible prison time and criminal fines of up to $250,000 for individuals and $500,000 for an organization.

Moshou's case is among the first prosecutions using the federal law, said Larry Slovensky, EarthLink's assistant general counsel.

The first criminal conviction under the federal law was believed to be in September 2004, when Nicholas Tombros, of Marina del Rey, Calif., pleaded guilty of using unprotected wireless networks to send more than 100 unsolicited adult-themed e-mails from his car.

Moshou's case marks the second high-profile prosecution EarthLink has helped secure. After the Internet service provider in 2003 won a $16.4 million judgment against Howard Carmack, the so-called Buffalo Spammer, the company turned its evidence over to New York prosecutors.

In May 2004, Carmack was sentenced to up to seven years in prison for sending 850 million junk e-mails through accounts he opened with stolen identities.

Moshou is expected to enter his guilty plea at 4 p.m. Thursday before U.S. District Judge Richard Story.

Beware of Fake Microsoft Security Alerts

A new wave of spam that disguises itself as a Microsoft security bulletin contains a link to malicious software that gives attackers complete access to the infected machine, security researchers are reporting.

The e-mail, which began circulating late Tuesday, identifies itself as Microsoft Security Bulletin MS05-039, and offers a link to what it claims is a patch against the Sober Zafi and Mytob worms.

In fact, there is no such thing as Microsoft Security Bulletin MS05-039, and real Microsoft security bulletins provide links to a Microsoft download site, rather than to the patches themselves, says Mikko Hyppnen, director of antivirus research at F-Secure. Microsoft has a Security Home Page.

The phony patch is a variant of the SDBot Trojan horse software, which is at present not detected by antivirus software products, according to a report from security research firm WebSense.

The risk of someone downloading this Trojan horse is very low right now, because the server hosting the Trojan horse downloads no longer seems active, Hyppnen says. That server, which appeared to be hosted by ThePlanet.com Internet Services, evidently has exceeded its allowed bandwidth, he says.

"I think this particular case is not going to be a problem anymore, but nevertheless I think it was a fairly interesting case," Hyppnen says. "I wouldn't be surprised to see more of this happening."

The Swen e-mail worm, which began circulating in 2003, used a similar technique, he adds.

U.S. to Retain Oversight of Web Traffic

A unilateral decision by the United States to indefinitely retain oversight of the Internet's main traffic-directing computers prompted concerns Friday that the global telecommunications network could eventually splinter.

"This seems like an extension of American security in the aftermath of 9-11," said John Strand, a Denmark-based technology consultant. "People will ask: 'Do the Americans want to control the Internet?'"

Washington's decision, announced Thursday, departs from previously stated U.S. policy.

Many countries favor gradually releasing oversight of the Internet's so-called "root servers" to an international body, and a showdown on the issue could come in November at a U.N. information society summit to be held in Tunisia. A U.N. report this month on Internet governance is expected to address the issue.

Michael D. Gallagher, an assistant secretary at the U.S. Commerce Department, said in announcing the policy shift Thursday that it was a response to growing security threats and increased reliance on the Internet globally for communications and commerce.

But the explanation did little to allay fears that the United States is overstepping its boundaries and locking its grip on the Internet, which as history's most powerful communications tool lets people do everything from sell secondhand shoes to promote Jihad or criticize authoritarian regimes.

Patrik Linden, a spokesman for the foundation that runs the Swedish national domain .se, called the U.S. announcement "rather confrontational" but said the move was what a lot of Internet experts thought Washington had always intended.

A Japanese government official said the declaration was sure to provoke debate.

"When the Internet is being increasingly utilized for private use, by businesses and so forth, there is a societal debate about whether it's befitting to have one country maintaining checks on that," said Masahiko Fujimoto of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' data communications division.

The "root servers" in question - 13 computers located mostly in the United States - are the Internet's master directories. They tell Web browsers and e-mail programs how to direct traffic, and Internet users the world over interact with them every day, though most without knowing it.

Robert Shaw, an policy adviser with the Geneva-based International Telecommunication Union, said he understood the basis for the U.S. decision: Root servers and other address-resolving computers lower down the traffic-management chain are vital and merit protecting just as much as cities, water supplies and highways.

"Many governments are legitimately concerned that another country has ultimate control of basically their communications infrastructure," he said. Some countries have pressed to move oversight of the root servers to an international body such as the ITU, a United Nations group.

Though physically in private hands, the root servers contain government-approved lists of the 260 or so Internet suffixes, such as ".com," ".net" and country designators like ".fr" for France or ".no" for Norway.

In 1998, the Commerce Department selected a private organization with international board members, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, to decide what goes on those lists.

But Thursday's declaration means the department will keep control over that process rather than ceding it to ICANN as originally intended, though the United States said ICANN would retain day-to-day operational control.

Naji Haddad, a Lebanese owner of a Web business, believes the U.S. decision will splinter the Internet.

"The announcement will definitely drive countries and organizations toward creating private solutions similar to what is currently offered by New.net and Walid.com (alternative naming systems), which will result in fracturing the global Internet into several networks," Haddad said.

In a worst-case scenario, countries refusing to accept U.S. control could establish their own separate versions of the Domain Name System, thereby making addresses in some regions unreachable in others.

The U.S. government has historically played the role of overseer because it funded much of the Internet's early development. And while it is not known to have interfered in any major sense with traffic-routing affecting other countries, that does not ease concerns that such interference could occur.

"It's not going to work in the long run to have the USA deciding everything by themselves," said Patrik Faltstrom, one of Sweden's foremost Internet experts.

The Amiga, Revisited

MLAgazine has a detailed history of the Amiga, from its beginnings as the pipe dream of a frustrated Atari engineer to it's beginnings as a revolutionary gaming console, through the mini-collapse of the gaming industry, and into the early days of the personal computer.

The Commodore Amiga began its life at Atari. Jay Miner, an engineer at the enormous video game company wanted to create a console centered around a 16 bit processor and a floppy drive, making development for the new console very easy and inexpensive. The executives at Atari were unwilling to risk damaging sales of their popular 8 bit consoles, and did not allow Miner to pursue his idea any further.

The idea for the new console was revived in 1982 after Jay Miner is contacted by Larry Kaplan, and old Atari employee who was enamored with the idea. Larry was interested in starting a new game company that would create a brand new console and license it to Atari. Jay lined up $7 million in investments from a group of dentists, an Hi-Toro was formed.

Hi-Toro had two divisions, one to produce games and peripherals for the

Atari 2600, and the other to develop the new console, which was named Lorraine (after the wife of CEO Dave Morse). The company marketed several successful peripherals for the Atari 2600, and also released several games. As a result, Hi-Toro was flush with cash to be used on the Lorraine project.

Miner headed the Lorraine project and envisioned a very ambitious feature set. The console would be much more powerful than its contemporaries and it would be much less expensive to develop for. Unlike the 2600, the Lorraine would be very popular and inexpensive to develop for.

The 68000 processor was adopted as the CPU, a processor more commonly used in workstations than game consoles.The Lorraine chipset was also very powerful. It took advantage of blitters, chips that allowed information to bypass the CPU completely. Thanks in part to the blitters on the mainboard, the machine was capable of using up to 4096 colors. This was unheard of in the video game industry.

More important than its performance and features, the Lorraine would be an easy platform to develop for. Unlike Atari (and Sony and Microsoft today), developers would not need a special development workstation to create the games. The Lorraine would be bundled with a keyboard and 3.5" floppy drive, eliminating the need for expensive workstations. Once a game was finished being developed, the company did not need to license the cartridge media from Hi-Toro, common floppy disks could be used.

Around the time that the Lorraine was entering beginning stages of development, Hi-Toro’s name changed to Amiga after it was discovered that a Japanese company already had the same name. The new name, chosen by Dave Morse, would be Amiga, Portuguese for woman friend.

In 1983, the video game industry was on the brink of collapse. Atari had not updated their line of consoles since the late seventies, and most consumers were uninterested in the company’s underpowered line of computers. After a series of failed game launches, the market fell through. TimeWarner, parent company of Atari, saw its stock price plummet to $20 from $60, and many game development companies went out of business. Amiga was not immune to the dip in demand, and was forced to look for more investors as revenues for its Atari products fell. The first demonstration of Lorraine was slated to be the 1984 CES show in Chicago, a seemingly impossible deadline.

The project was divided into to two groups. One, headed by Jay Miner, focused on completing the hardware of the computer, while the other, led by Dale Luck created an operating system for the new system. Hardware design was nearly finished by mid-1983, and was mostly centered around minituarizing the machine’s components. The software team on the other hand had a major task ahead of them.

Instead of develop an entire operating system for CES, the software team focused on creating several demos that would show off the technical prowess of the machine. The most popular and impressive of these demos was the "Boing Ball" demo where a red checkered sphere bounced around the screen.

By early 1984, Amiga was ready for CES, kind of. The hardware prototype was on four different breadboards, not in the custom case that Miner had designed. Nonetheless, many of the show’s visitors were impressed by the machine’s power, but Amiga was unable to find an investor to help complete the project.

Atari was also present during the show, and was impressed by the Lorraine. Instead of offering to invest in the company outright, Atari offered a $500,000 loan in exchange for the Lorraine's motherboard design. The loan would have to be paid back in one month. If Amiga was unable to pay the loan, all of the Lorraine project would be forfeited to Atari. Nobody at Amiga liked the plan, but there was no alternative, and the company accepted. Atari knew that Amiga would not be able to afford the loan, and would be forced to cede the Lorraine for a fraction of its real price. Many of the engineers at Amiga feared that Atari had no interest in the team itself, only in the chipset, which would be used to thwart Commodore's plans to release a 16 bit home UNIX computer.

In a corporate coup at Commodore, Jack Tramiel walks out of the company with much of its engineering staff and buys Atari from TimeWarner. Tramiel uses the Amiga deal to get back at Commodore, and sues the company for interfering with the deal. The suit was unsuccessful, and served only to pique Commodore's interest in Amiga's technologies. Commodore buys Amiga and pays Atari's loan back days before it was due. The Lorraine was renamed Amiga and would be released in one year.

Commodore had no experience in the console market, and decides to pitch the Amiga as a home computer and the successor to the wildly successful Commodore 64. A brand new case was also designed, with the characteristic keyboard case below the display.

By late 1984, the Amiga's hardware was finished, but the operating system and GUI were still lagging behind. Commodore, worried that it would miss its ship date, decided to adopt an existing operating system, Tripos. Tripos was not nearly as advanced as the system that Dale and Jay had wanted, but it was still far more advanced than the Macintosh System or MS-DOS. The Amiga software developers set to work creating a user interface for the new operating system. Instead of using a desktop metaphor as GEM and Macintosh, the Workbench used a work bench metaphor.

Files were called projects and were stored in drawers. The developers at Amiga also decided to include a command interpreter into the Amiga, making it more attractive to power users. Since most users would probably use the Amiga on a television set, a high contrast theme of blue and orange was used to make it easier to see.

Tramiel's Atari did not intend to give Commodore the 16 bit market, and produced another 68000 based computer (mostly from off the shelf components), the Atari ST, and released it before the Amiga. The machine was not nearly as impressive as the Amiga, it used the single tasking CP/M-68k operating system (also available for the LISA) and GEM GUI, but it was good enough for many home users.

Commodore was apparently unfazed by the new product, and released the Amiga in Lincoln Center on July 11, 1985. Andy Warhol, who had been a devoted Mac user since 1983, showed off the machines graphical abilities, and several musicians took advantage of its sound system. The audience was thrilled, and the press was impressed by the Amiga. Unfortunately, the machine's price kept it out of most consumer's homes. The Atari ST cost less than half the price of the Amiga, and had many of the same features. The Amiga was going head to head with the Macintosh Plus, and without the vast collection of software the Plus had, it did not fare well.

Despite its slow start, many developers were thrilled with the computers capabilities. Electronic Arts embraced the Amiga and became its largest developer, releasing Deluxe Paint for the Amiga, with features impossible

on any other platform. The Amiga was also popular amongst television producers, since it had an onboard NTSC interface. Video Toaster was released on the Amiga, and is still used today by many producers.

Commodore was not oblivious to the limited appeal of the expensive Amiga, and worked to widen it. Commodore created the Amiga 2000 (developed by a separate team based in Germany) and repriced the original Amiga, renamed the Amiga 1000, to be more competitive with the ST. The original Amiga team was upset with Commodore's management of the product, especially after the release of the 2000 (which was seen as being technically inferior to the 1000) and most left.

1987 was the most significant year in Amiga history. Commodore released the German designed Amiga 500, which actually cost less than the ST, and began a marketing blitz to sell home users on the Amiga. The scheme was relatively successful in North America, but was especially effective in Europe, which became the largest market for Amigas in the world. At the end of the fiscal year of 1987, Commodore had posted a $28 million profit, and seemed destined to regain its Commodore 64 glory days.

The Atari ST began to sputter in 1987. Its software had not had a major update since its launch, and was well beinhd Amiga and the Macintosh in terms of features. Atari completely aanbdoned the North American market, and focused its last effort at Europe, where it enjoyed mild success for several years to come.

Commodore continued to release new products spanning a huge price range. From the inexpensive A500 to the high end Amiga 3000. During this time, Workbench received a major face lift. A gray and blue color scheme replaced the garish orange and blue of the earlier workbench.
 Moving beyond the personal computer, Commodore attempted to put Amiga in the living room (as Jay Miner had intended in 1979). The result was the CD32 and CDTV. The CDTV, introduced in 1991, was a basic Amiga 500 with a TV tuner bundled. The CD32 had the distinction of being the first "32 bit console" but almost no software was written for the device, forcing users to use standard Amiga programs with interfaces optimized for the computer screen. For both devices, Commodreo was eager to differentiate the Amiga brand from its consumer electronics devices. Retailers were not permitted to display the devices within five yards of the computer section and were encouraged not to stress the presence of Workbench.

Commodore began to falter in the early nineties, as the PC became more advanced. The multimedia features that wowed audiences in 1985 were commonplace in even inexpensive computers of the early nineties. With the advent of VGA graphics, SoundBlasters and Windows 3.1, Amiga had little to offer. Commodore failed to update its lineup as technology advanced, ultimately resulting in the company marketing pitifully underequipped computers in the same range of PC clones (at one point, a 7 mhz A500+ cost more than a 33 mhz IBM clone)

Not until the early nineties did Commodore release Amigas that had similar specs to comparably priced PC's, but the Amiga brand had already been associated with low end home computers in the public eye. Commodore went bankrupt in 1994, and the Amiga brand bounced around from owner to owner with little success. Today, it is owned by Amiga Inc, which licenses the software to several hardware manufacturers, whose computers are mainly used in video production.

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